

Week 3 (February 18-24): Lesson Guide

Introduce guests/share life. *How has this week been going? Good? Bad? Ugly? Things to celebrate?*

Open in prayer. *Include any prayer needs that came up while you were sharing life together.*

Recall the guidelines together. *Ask: "What is the purpose of the guidelines?" Answer: To be relational!*

Hook Question: Can you share about a time you were suffering and you couldn't do anything about it?

Ask someone from your team to tell or read the following background for the story:

Sometimes stories in the Bible are vague. God's Word is inspired by Him. When a story is vague, it means those details aren't the focal point. That begs the question, what is the purpose of this story? Some of the details in today's story from the book of Ruth are vague. As we hear and discuss this story, it is important that we look for the main message. God wants us to hear His heart in this story today.

Here's the background. Naomi was an Israelite, married to an Israelite man during the period of the judges (a generally wicked period in Israel). They had two sons. A famine struck the land, and they moved into a foreign country called Moab to escape. While there, the sons took Moabite wives. Then, tragedy struck the family. All the men of the family died, leaving three widows. Naomi decided to go back to her hometown in Israel. Ruth, one of her daughter-in-laws, was determined to go with her. They moved back to Israel to Naomi's hometown of Bethlehem together. They came weak, poor, and in need.

In that day, the poor would go to the fields and collect whatever they could find to eat after the harvesters came through. With Naomi's blessing, Ruth went out to collect food. She happened upon a field that belonged to Boaz. Boaz was a distant relative (how distant is vague) of Naomi. Ruth was unaware of this family tie. While collecting in his field, Ruth found favor with Boaz. He was impressed by her selflessness to leave her home country to come and care for her widowed mother-in-law. Boaz protected her by ordering his men to deal kindly with her and by telling them to leave extra food behind for her to glean. He even invited her to eat with him and his men.

When Ruth returned to Naomi, she had a lot of food. Naomi knew she had gained favor with a field owner. Ruth told Naomi that the man's name was Boaz. Naomi rejoiced and praised God, and she informed Ruth that Boaz was one of their kinsman redeemers... Pause. "What's a kinsman redeemer," you ask? A kinsman redeemer was a position that God had prescribed in his law. It was a part of the welfare system of Israel. When a man died, a close relative on his side, a kinsman redeemer, had the responsibility or privilege to act on behalf of the relatives who were in trouble, danger, or need. God's law given to Moses outlined various roles that a kinsman redeemer could fulfill. This included marrying a widow to care for her, and continuing the inheritance of the deceased husband through her children.

When Naomi learned it was Boaz, she instructed Ruth to declare to Boaz that he was their kinsman redeemer. If Boaz would step in and redeem Naomi and Ruth, he would transform their lives. He would be able to offer them protection, provision, comfort, land, and an inheritance! (Sound familiar to what Jesus has done for us?) Naomi prescribed the precise method Ruth should use to make this declaration to Boaz, and she followed her advice. When Ruth declared to Boaz that he was the kinsman redeemer, he responded with kindness and said he would redeem both her and Naomi! There was only one issue: there was one other man who was a closer relative to Naomi than Boaz. He was first in line to redeem. Boaz said he would work on this first thing in the morning. These issues were often settled outside the city gate with the elders. Boaz went to the gate in the morning, and this is where our story begins...

Tell the story from Ruth 4:1-17: Change up the storyteller often!

Rebuild the story: Group members retell the story based on what they remember.

Read the story from Ruth 4:1-17: Ask the group to read together.

Discuss these questions:

- **One more fact to consider:** As far as we can tell, it is not clear if the other redeemer did a dishonorable thing by deciding to not redeem Naomi and Ruth; however, it is clear that he was most interested in personal gain. Boaz, on the other hand, decided to redeem Naomi and Ruth at great personal cost, because he would not benefit financially in any way, and it would personally cost him to care for these women. It is interesting how Boaz became part of the lineage of Jesus by embracing this opportunity to redeem! (Jesus was born of the line of David.)
- What stands out to you in this story? What do you like or dislike?
- What does this story teach us about people?
- What does this story teach us about God? (Note: The New Testament says that Jesus, as our brother, is a type of kinsman redeemer to all of us.)
- Who do you relate to in this story, and what do you need to change based on this story?
- Ask someone to retell this week's story one last time.

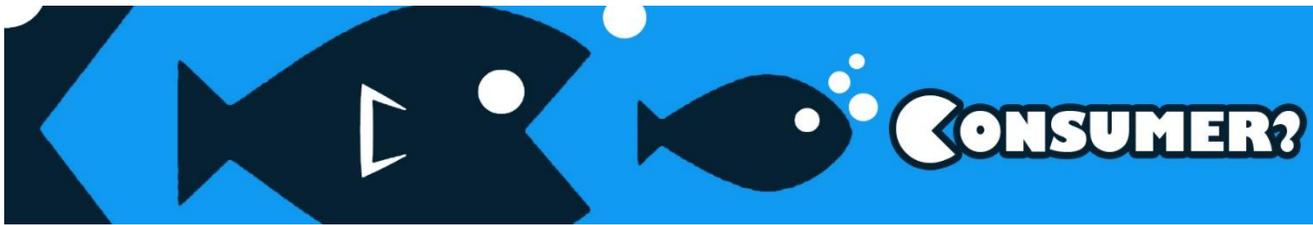
Head
Questions:
Quicker
tempo.

Heart Questions:
Slow down & wait!

Action

Close in prayer.

Recruit a storyteller for next week.



Week 3: Coaching Guide

The Discipleship Process

The *Discipleship Process* is outlined in 201. It shows the journey of spiritual growth that every follower of Jesus must progress through. The process is laid out on the *Discipleship Wheel*. Intentional leaders help people learn the *Discipleship Process*, and they are intentional about helping people move around the wheel towards spiritual maturity.

Spiritual Young Adults

By connecting to God, to a group, and to their purpose, spiritual children grow out of self-centeredness and become God and others centered. When this change happens, they mature into spiritual young adulthood. This spiritual phase of maturity is much like the physical phase of young adulthood. Young adults are often ambitious, zealous, and excited to get involved. However, they need guidance as they can often over or underestimate their own abilities, misunderstand people or situations, and battle feelings of uncertainty. Young adults need three things to help them grow:

1. Equipped for ministry
2. Opportunities to minister
3. Be released to minister

Group is the primary place where young adults can find new ways to get off the benches and into the game. There are so many ways a group leader can give spiritual young adults a place to play! The first and easiest step is to invite young adults to tell the story. If they are uncertain, offer to meet with them and help them practice (or even better, have another young adult in your group meet with them to help!). You can include young adults in several other ways: ask them to facilitate a group meeting, assign them a spiritual infant or child that they can contact weekly to be relational with them and encourage them, ask them to go with you to visit someone in the hospital, invite them to leadership trainings, ask them to join you to volunteer in church-wide events or service projects, connect them with various ministries at the church, ask them to prepare a meal for a couple in the group who just had a baby or just came home from the hospital, etc. etc. etc. If you want to branch, THE MOST IMPORTANT ASSIGNMENT you can give is to encourage young adults to go out and find someone they can share the story with outside of group each week. This assignment helps young adults get comfortable with taking the story to others, and it is the first step to branching.

Leadership Evaluation

Leading spiritual young adults can be a delight! The most important thing for you to remember is to stay intentional. How did Jesus help His disciples grow and mature? Yes, He spent time with them, was transparent with them, and modeled ministry for them. But He did something even more specific. He gave them assignments. Remember the feeding of the 5000 and how the disciples distributed and collected? Or how Jesus sent His disciples out ahead of Him two by two into various cities? Or how He gave them the ability to cast out spirits and heal people? Or how he told them to baptize people? All these were practical ways to get His disciples into the game through assignments. The young adults in your group need assignments. Don't miss this chance to help them grow.